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NSC BRIEFING

5 December 1958

FRENCH ELECTION AFTERMATH

- I. Massive electoral victory of Mestelle-led New Republic Union (UNR) represents a vote for De Gaulle rather, <sup>though De Gaulle doesn't like it</sup> than voters' allegiance to a new party.
- II. The real orientation of the new French assembly may not be apparent for several months.
  - A. UNR encompasses wide range of political views united only by "Gaullism," which is subject to vastly different interpretations by self-styled Gaullists.
    1. Its strong nationalistic current will, however, encourage De Gaulle's efforts to enhance France's international prestige.
    2. Assembly convenes on 9 December to elect its own officers, and reconvenes in January to approve the program the new government will present. It will then recess until 29 April.
- III. Virtual elimination of extremists (ten Communists and one Poujadist in new assembly) assures greater flexibility than heretofore for coalitions based on democratic forces, but the assembly is preponderantly rightist in orientation.
  - A. No assurance, however, that De Gaulle will have easy sailing.
    1. De Gaulle had hoped for government evenly divided between left and right, which would have given him freedom to arbitrate.

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B. Socialists are under pressure to go into opposition.

i. There will be increasing push for Socialist ties with the Communists, who despite the first major drop in electoral strength held 20 percent of voters.

IV. De Gaulle must now weigh desirability of pressing for solution of Algerian issue while he still has overriding legal authority and great prestige.

A. He is visiting Algeria 3-7 December and may dramatize re-establishment of civil authority by replacing General Salan.

B. His problem will be to decide whether or not he can disregard claims that the vote for GNA is mandate for integration.

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	<u>% Pop vote</u>		<u>Deputies</u>	
	1956	1958	1956	1958
Communists	25.4	20.7	144	10
Socialists	14.2	13.8	92	40
Radicals, etc.	13.8	7.8	77	35
MRP	10.6	?	71	57
Independents	14.2	14.9	108	132
UNR	4.2	26.5	18	188
Poujadists	11.4	?	30	1
Abstention	17.3	25.2		

Of the 465 deputies from Metropolitan France:

269 are new;  
146 were in the '56 assembly;  
50 were pre-1956 deputies

338 ex-deputies who ran in '58 were defeated.